

REMARKS

Applicants respectfully acknowledge receipt of the Office Action mailed November 17, 2005.

In the Office Action, the Examiner: (1) rejected claims 1, 5-7, and 11 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by *Ushida et al.* (U.S. Patent No. 5,575,684); (2) allowed claim 12; and (3) objected to claims 3, 8-10, and 13 as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form.

By this Amendment, Applicants amend claims 1 and 11 and cancel claim 13 without prejudice or disclaimer. Claim 2 was previously canceled in the "Amendment After Final" filed June 22, 2005, and claim 4 was previously canceled in the "Response to Office Action" filed December 28, 2004. After entry of this Amendment, claims 1, 3, and 5-12 will remain pending. Of these claims, claims 1, 11, and 12 are independent.

The originally-filed specification, claims, abstract, and drawings fully support the amendments of claims 1 and 11. No new matter has been introduced.

Applicants gratefully acknowledge the Examiner's allowance of claim 12.

Applicants also acknowledge the Examiner's indication of allowable subject matter in claims 3, 8-10, and 13. Consequently, Applicants have amended claim 1 to include a feature of allowable claim 13, and have cancelled claim 13. Additionally, Applicants have amended claim 11 to include a feature of allowable claim 3.

Accordingly, independent claims 1 and 11 are in condition for allowance. In addition, claims 3 and 5-10 are in condition for allowance at least due to their dependence from independent claim 1.

I. 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) REJECTION OF CLAIMS 1 AND 11

Claims 1 and 11 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by *Ushida*. Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection.

Although Applicants do not necessarily agree with the Examiner's rejection, Applicants have amended claim 1 to include a feature of allowable claim 13 and have amended claim 11 to include a feature of allowable claim 3. It is those features which the Examiner admits are not disclosed in either *Ushida* or any other prior art of record. (*Office Action*, p. 3, ll. 11-15). Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the rejection of claims 1 and 11 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) be withdrawn.

Moreover, claims 3 and 5-10 are in condition for allowance at least due to their dependence from independent claim 1.

II. CONCLUSION

Applicants respectfully submit that independent claims 1, 11, and 12 are in condition for allowance. In addition, claims 3 and 5-10 are in condition for allowance at least due to their dependence from independent claim 1.

The Office Action contains characterizations of the claims and the related art with which Applicants do not necessarily agree. Unless expressly noted otherwise, Applicants decline to subscribe to any statement or characterization in the Office Action.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and reexamination of this application and the timely allowance of the pending claims.

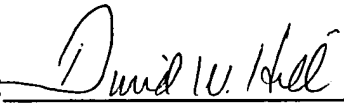
Application No. 10/616,976
Attorney Docket No. 06753.0554-00000

Please grant any extensions of time required to enter this response and charge any additional required fees to our deposit account 06-0916.

Respectfully submitted,

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Dated: February 10, 2006

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